

UNDERSTANDING THE SUPERYACHT MARKET AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR PACIFIC TOURISM:

A Solomon Islands Case Study

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1. INTRODUCTION

The number of in-service superyachts is growing globally. Superyachts visiting countries in the Pacific region present an appealing high-value market segment for Pacific Island countries to attract and grow. However, tourism information is not readily available on the size and scale, preconditions, and opportunities to generate and retain value from this market.

This working paper collates background information on the global and regional superyacht sector for policy advisors and decision-makers in ADB Pacific developing member countries. This high-level case study of Solomon Islands identifies opportunities and challenges for governments considering this segment. The information in this paper is the result of desk-based research. No primary research—including interviews—was undertaken.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE SUPERYACHT MARKET

2.1 What is a superyacht?

There is no standard definition for “superyachts,” “megayachts,” or “gigayachts.” Superyachts are commonly defined as private or commercial luxury vessels, motor or sail powered, 24 meters (m) or longer, have a professional crew, that do not carry cargo or more than a small number of passengers.¹ The Superyacht Times annually publishes comprehensive superyacht market intelligence and captures information on vessels of 30 m or more in length. This definition applies where market intelligence is presented from this source.²

Superyachts are part of the international yachting tourism market, a special interest segment of the marine tourism market described as “*active holidays in contact with the sea.*”³

2.2 Superyacht owners

Owners of superyachts are typically individuals with a net wealth of \$30 million or more.⁴ For vessels over 40 m, the largest ownership share is by the US (23.6%), followed by owners from Russia (8.1%), Greece (6.2%), Türkiye (5.7%), and the UK (5.4%).⁵

The growth in the superyacht market is driven by a growth in the number of high and ultra-high-net-worth individuals globally, combined with the growing popularity of coastal and marine tourism.⁶ Many superyacht owners and guests are seeking to explore remote locations, combining cruising with philanthropy, and aiming for purpose and transformational-based experiences.⁷

Owners and guests typically fly to cruising destinations to join their superyacht, with the crew moving the vessel between destinations.

2.3 Global size and value of the superyacht market

In 2022, the global superyacht market was valued at \$2.7 billion. This was generated through expenditure on construction, refit and maintenance, employment, chartering, and other services relating to

1 This common definition derives from national codes that apply safety standards to commercial vessels. For example, the popularly applied “Large Commercial Yacht Code (LY2)” defines a “large yacht” as one that is 24 meters (79 feet) or more at the waterline and is in commercial use for sport or pleasure, while not carrying cargo or more than 12 passengers, and carrying a professional crew. The code regulates the equipping of such vessels—both at sea and in port—including such matters as crew duty times and the presence of a helicopter on board. Source: Maritime and Coastguard Agency (September 2007). The Large Commercial Yacht Code (LY2). Southampton: Department of Transport.

2 Superyacht Times. 2023. *The State of Yachting 2023*. <https://www.superyachttimes.com/market-reports/the-state-of-yachting-2023>

3 Market Development Facility. 2018. *Economic Impact of International Yachting in Fiji*. Suva.

4 Government of Queensland. 2022. *Queensland Superyacht Strategy 2018 to 2028. Edition 2*. Brisbane.

5 Superyacht Times. 2023. *The State of Yachting 2023*. <https://www.superyachttimes.com/market-reports/the-state-of-yachting-2023>

6 Research and Markets. 2023. *Yacht Industry - Global Strategic Business Report*. October.

7 Laver, R. 2021. Luxury travel: the 2021 Superyacht trends you need to know. *EHL Insights*. <https://hospitalityinsights.ehl.edu/2021-superyacht-trends>

superyachts.⁸ The market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 5.5% reaching \$4.4 billion by 2030.⁹

At the start of 2023, there were 5,555 superyachts over 30 m in length, with 668 scheduled for construction through 2023 and the following years.¹⁰ Of the fleet, 84% are motor yachts and 16% are sailing yachts. More than 80% of superyachts are 30 m to 50 m (5,280), 13% are between 50 m and 80 m (858), and 3% are over 80 m (198).

By 2025, there is expected to be more than 6,600 superyachts worldwide, a 44% growth during 2012–2022, and a more than sixfold increase from the 917 vessels that were in use in 1987.¹¹

2.4 The superyacht operating environment

Operating models: Superyachts operate either as privately-owned vessels for recreational use by their owner or as commercial vessels that provide transport, accommodation, or services for people who have paid for passage on or chartered the vessel.¹² These categories are not mutually exclusive with some vessels operating privately for periods of the year and available commercially for the remainder. Globally, approximately 44% of all superyachts are available for commercial charter, with this number increasing year on year.¹³ The decision to use a superyacht commercially is largely driven by whether the owner wishes to derive revenue from the vessel. The distinction between the two operational models is relevant as the model affects where in the world superyacht cruises and docks, how long it stays, and its spending patterns.

Migration patterns: Commercially operated superyachts plan their calendars to maximize revenue, whereas privately used vessels are more contingent on the preferences of their owners. However, some cruising destinations are preferable at certain times of the year. The most common migration is from cruising the Mediterranean in the European summer to the Caribbean in the winter. In 2021, cruising the waters of Central and South America, Antarctica, the Pacific islands, Northern Europe, and Costa Rica were recognized as becoming increasingly popular for superyachts.¹⁴

Key factors influencing migration decisions include:

- (i) the length and overall size of the superyacht, as some destinations do not have the berthing facilities for all sizes of superyachts;
- (ii) seasons and weather patterns;
- (iii) superyacht maintenance cycles and the location of suitable facilities;
- (iv) the level of infrastructure and services a destination offers superyachts;
- (v) charter company and guest preferences;
- (vi) regulatory requirements and processes in individual countries; and
- (vii) insurance coverage.

8 Research and Markets. 2023. *Yacht Industry - Global Strategic Business Report*. October.

9 Grand View Research. 2023. *Superyacht Market Analysis and Growth Report 2030*. San Francisco.

10 Superyacht Times. 2023. *The State of Yachting 2023*.

11 Government of Queensland. 2022. *Queensland Superyacht Strategy 2018 to 2028. Edition 2*. Brisbane.

12 Boat International. 2015. *Yacht Classification Definitions*. 21 January.

13 Robb Report. 2022. *How to Charter a Superyacht: Everything You Need to Know About Booking a High-Seas Vacation*. 22 April.

14 Robb Report. 2022. *How to Charter a Superyacht: Everything You Need to Know About Booking a High-Seas Vacation*. 22 April.

Charter brokers: Almost all superyachts that operate commercially contract a professional broker to manage all aspects of the charter. Superyacht charters range from day cruises to multi-day voyages which include corporate events and functions. A charter broker is similar to a tour operator and holds a database of available superyachts. They research the most suitable places to cruise, tailor-make, and sell superyacht holidays to wealthy individuals all over the world. Some charter brokers specialize in geographic regions, others cover all destinations.

Crew: All superyachts have crew onboard all year round regardless of whether they are fully private or commercial. Crew numbers can vary from 7 to 30 per superyacht depending on a superyacht's size, and whether it is motorized or a sailing vessel. When a superyacht is cruising, crew changeovers are common practice and are driven by individual crew holidays and the migration patterns of the yacht. For example, moving from the northern to the southern hemisphere may require a different crew. Crew positions depend on the size of the superyacht and can include the captain, engineers, electricians, carpenters, first mates, chefs, deckhands, water sports instructors, dive masters, helicopter pilots, purser, spa managers, florists, nannies, and hospitality staff. Many of the crew roles are highly specialized with owners using recruitment agencies to fill them. A country's foreign visa rules for superyacht crew, flight and airport access for crew changeover, and other onshore services for crew such as restaurants, car rental, and shopping, all have an impact on the attractiveness of a destination for superyachts.

Insurance: Insurance coverage for superyachts influences where and when they can cruise. It is becoming expensive and difficult for superyachts to obtain insurance for cruising in areas with a cyclone risk. In such destinations, insurers impose predefined areas and dates for superyachts to adhere to. Obtaining insurance to cruise in areas with political instability, war, or threats of terrorism is also challenging.¹⁵

Regulations: When superyachts are at sea, they fall under the jurisdiction of their flag state—the country they are registered under—as well as the yacht code under which they were built. Consequently, they comply with regulations issued by the International Maritime Organization. Once they enter a country's territorial waters they also must comply with that country's maritime, immigration, customs, and tourism regulations.¹⁶ The level and complexity of these regulations play a key role in deciding where a vessel will cruise. In Australia, new regulations in 2019 to allow foreign-flagged superyachts to charter in Australian waters were expected to result in a 300% increase in superyacht visitation over 3 years.¹⁷

2.5 The economic contribution of superyachts

Superyachts can significantly contribute to a country's economy. In 2017, in Auckland, New Zealand, superyacht visitation is believed to have generated a value add of \$89 million and provided the equivalent of 1,780 jobs.¹⁸ In Tahiti, the estimated economic impact of superyachts in 2018 was \$28 million.¹⁹ In 2020, visiting superyachts contributed an estimated \$100 million to the Australian economy.²⁰

15 Yachting World. 2022. *Bluewater cruising insurance – what you need to know*. 13 April.

16 <https://www.yachtingworld.com/features/bluewater-cruising-insurance-138036> *Superyacht Life Press Kit*. 2021. June.

17 *Superyacht Australia*. 2021. n.d.

18 M.E. Consulting. 2017. *Auckland's Superyacht Industry: Outlook and Potential Economic Impacts*.

19 The Superyacht Agency. 2019. *Economic impact of Superyachts on Tahiti*. Tahiti Tourisme.

20 *Superyacht Australia*. 2021. n.d.

Revenue generated from superyachts can be categorized into six areas:

- (i) Construction
- (ii) Refit and maintenance
- (iii) Operating expenditure
- (iv) Charter taxes and other taxes
- (v) Crew and guest expenditure
- (vi) Environmental and social impacts

Construction: The average superyacht takes 3 years to build. For countries to benefit economically from the construction of superyachts they must first have reputable shipyards. Of 232 active shipyards in 2023, 138 were building one or more superyachts. Türkiye was home to 25% of shipyards, and Italy was home to 23%. Output from shipyards varies greatly. Türkiye built an average of 2.2 yachts per shipyard over the last 10 years compared to Italy, which built an average of 12.2 yachts per shipyard in the same period. Nearly 80% of all superyachts built during 2012–2022 were constructed in Italy, the Netherlands, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom. Other countries in the top 10 for constructing superyachts include Finland, Germany, the People’s Republic of China, the US, and the United Arab Emirates.²¹ The construction of a single superyacht can support hundreds of jobs for 19–36 months. Within the Pacific region, Australia is seen as an emerging construction market, investing in high quality superyacht manufacturing primarily in Perth. In 2016, the construction of superyachts contributed on average an estimated \$88.5 million per year over a four year period to the Australian economy, accounting for 88% of total Australian superyacht revenue.²²

Maintenance and refit: Superyachts have very specific maintenance schedules and survey requirements that result in a constant expenditure stream. These schedules are recurring, and are usually across 2 and 5-year cycles. These cycles determine where the vessels will travel globally. Countries that provide the infrastructure to carry out refit and maintenance work can benefit from a high percentage of superyacht arrivals and the additional tourism expenditure flows.²³ During the period 2019–2021, there were on average 1,450 yard visits per year for yachts over 30 m. In contrast to new builds, 24% of refits took place in the US in 2022, followed by Italy, France, and Spain.²⁴

Typically, superyachts allow 4 to 6 weeks of maintenance time per year and spend more than 10% of their purchase value on maintenance annually.²⁵ Refits can take up to 5 months. New Zealand focuses on refits and maintenance, and was ranked 13th globally for the number of refits in 2019–2020.²⁶ In 2017, for the wider Auckland region, superyacht visitation was projected to increase its value add to the economy from \$89m to \$100m by 2022, and higher with investment.²⁷

21 Superyacht Times. 2023. *The State of Yachting 2023*. <https://www.superyachttimes.com/market-reports/the-state-of-yachting-2023>

22 AEC Group Limited. 2016. *Economic Impact of the Superyacht Sector on the Australian Economy*.

23 Superyacht Times. 2022. *The State of Yachting 2021*. Published July 2021.

24 Superyacht Times. 2023. *The State of Yachting 2023*. <https://www.superyachttimes.com/market-reports/the-state-of-yachting-2023>

25 Government of Queensland. 2022. *Queensland Superyacht Strategy 2018 to 2028*. Updated in May 2022. Edition 2.

26 Superyacht Times. 2023. *The State of Yachting 2023*. <https://www.superyachttimes.com/market-reports/the-state-of-yachting-2023>

27 M.E. Consulting. 2017. *Auckland’s Superyacht Industry: Outlook and Potential Economic Impacts*.

Operating expenditure: The annual operating expenditure of a superyacht can vary greatly, from \$100,000 to \$1 million, depending on the size and engineering complexity of the vessel, the number of crew members, and the operating model. Expenditure in countries that superyachts visit includes fuel, minor maintenance, dockage fees, housekeeping supplies, and food and drink provisioning. For a 50 m superyacht with 12 crew, this operating expenditure can average \$2 million–\$4 million per year.²⁸

Charter taxes: Countries also derive revenue from superyachts through taxation. This is commonly through a charter tax, which can take the form of specific requirements within value-added (VAT) or goods and services (GST) tax regulations. For example, in Australia, foreign owned superyachts are charged 10% GST on the total cost of a charter, and in Fiji, superyachts are charged a 5% superyacht charter fee with a minimum payment of \$30,000 per week.²⁹ Other charges and taxes imposed by countries include superyacht permits, custom fees, crew visas and permits, VAT or GST on goods and services purchased, and import duties.

As with other sectors, countries seek to balance taxation with being an appealing destination for superyachts. For example, Tahiti earns on average \$12,000 per year for each superyacht through a 5% superyacht charter tax. However, the average expenditure in Tahiti by each superyacht is \$248,755. A 2019 report recommended the government reduce the charter tax rate to attract a greater number of superyacht charters, which would result in a larger overall contribution to the economy.³⁰ New Zealand seeks to incentivize longer superyacht stays—including refitting—through temporary import entry laws, which allow foreign crew on superyachts cruising New Zealand waters to work tax-free for up to 2 years. It also allows superyachts to stay in New Zealand for up to 24 months without having to be legally imported, during which time all items, equipment, and services—such as berthage fees, repairs, and refitting work acquired in New Zealand—are tax free.³¹

Guest and crew expenditure: The contribution of guests and crew to an economy varies depending on their spending habits onshore, length of stay, and whether or not the superyacht is motorized or a sailing vessel. Motorized superyachts tend to contribute more to an economy as they carry more crew and guests than sailing superyachts of the same size.³²

Guests aboard superyachts are typically very wealthy individuals with relatively unconstrained capacity for expenditure. For example, in Australia, guests on board superyachts spend up to \$25,000 per day per visitor³³ and in Tahiti, the weekly expenditure of guests per superyacht on boutique shopping is \$15,189.³⁴ Guest expenditure includes spending in restaurants, bars, accommodation pre- and post-trip, handicrafts, shopping, medical, activities, car hire, transport, fuel, and visas. The largest share is in shopping, restaurants, and bars. Crew expenditure is similar to guest expenditure, although at lower amounts, and with additional payments for permits and visas for work. During maintenance and refits, crew expenditure expands to accommodation in rental houses, rental cars, gym memberships, the purchase of water toys such as kayaks and surf kites, and spending on training and upskilling.³⁵

28 AEC Group Limited. 2016. *Economic Impact of the Superyacht Sector on the Australian Economy*.

29 Superyacht Content. 2022. New Fiji Yacht Charter Regulations. 26 July.

30 The Superyacht Agency. 2019. *Economic Impact of Superyachts on Tahiti*. Tahiti Tourisme.

31 *Boat International*. 2022. Foreign-flagged vessels permitted to cruise in the South Pacific under new regulations. 24 May.

32 The Superyacht Agency. 2019. *Economic impact of Superyachts on Tahiti*. Tahiti Tourisme.

33 Aimex and Superyacht Australia. 2016. *The Economic Impact of the Superyacht Sector on the Australian Economy*.

34 The Superyacht Agency. 2019. *Economic impact of Superyachts on Tahiti*. Tahiti Tourisme.

35 M.E. Consulting. 2017. *Auckland's Superyacht Industry: Outlook and Potential Economic Impacts*.

Philanthropy: Superyachts can make a positive contribution to marine conservation and other charitable causes in a country, with many superyacht owners having charitable and philanthropic foundations supporting ocean conservation, scientific research, or community support. For example, The Yachts for Science initiative launched in 2019—a collaboration between four superyacht-owning families that form the Ocean Family Foundation—connects marine scientists with superyachts that can take them to the places in the world’s oceans they wish to study.³⁶ YachtAid Global is a charitable organization that has helped over 300 superyachts take part in a diverse range of projects over 17 years, from donating books to remote community libraries to disaster relief and ocean monitoring projects.³⁷

2.6 The costs of attracting the superyacht market

Countries around the world are starting to recognize the potential economic and social benefits of visiting superyachts and are considering what steps can be taken to attract this high-value segment. In most cases, this means regulatory change, investment in infrastructure, and the support of local and national governments.

While there are many potential benefits from targeting the superyacht market, the level of investment required to capture these benefits can be significant. Investments in superyacht infrastructure can be multi-million dollar projects requiring support from public and private sector investors. For example, in Queensland, Australia, the government has invested an average of A\$30 million every 5 years in upgrading maritime infrastructure to attract superyachts.³⁸ Careful consideration of the return on any investment and any related tax incentives is required.

In addition to economic considerations, there are also environmental considerations. Superyachts are under increasing scrutiny for their carbon footprint with owners being branded “climate criminals.”³⁹

36 [Yachts for Science](#).

37 Ocean Magazine. 2023. *Cruising with Purpose*. 17 August.

38 Government of Queensland. 2023. *Recreational boating infrastructure*.

39 Superyacht Times. 2023. *The State of Yachting 2023*. <https://www.superyachttimes.com/market-reports/the-state-of-yachting-2023>

3. THE SUPERYACHT MARKET IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

3.1 Overview

While yachts have been visiting the South Pacific region for many years, superyachts are a relatively new market with the number of superyachts still small. Data is available for the superyacht market in Australia, New Zealand, and Tahiti, and limited data is available for Fiji and Vanuatu. However, there is no data for the region as a whole.

The main superyacht season in the Pacific is from May to November, with August and September the busiest. While the seasonality varies from country to country, the main determining factor is the November to April cyclone season. Australia and New Zealand are considered year-round destinations and can cater to refit and maintenance work during cyclone seasons.

Before the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, there were approximately 60 or more foreign-owned superyachts in the South Pacific each year.⁴⁰ The majority of these superyachts are commercially operated and are 30 m to 65 m, with those visiting Australia and New Zealand being significantly larger.⁴¹ In contrast, Australia has 273 superyachts concentrated mostly around Sydney Harbour and south-east Queensland, and is the only country in the Pacific region with a notable fleet of superyachts owned locally. An estimated 40 to 60 of these vessels are regularly used commercially for cruising the Pacific region.⁴²

3.2 Economic contribution

In Fiji, the average length of stay of a superyacht charter is 82 days⁴³ whereas in Australia it is 128 days.⁴⁴ In Tahiti, chartered superyachts stay an average of 24 days compared to non-chartered superyachts which stay 112 days.

In Tahiti, each superyacht is estimated to spend on average \$75,000 per week with the largest expenditure areas being airline transportation, fuel, food provisioning, and boutique shopping.⁴⁵ In Fiji, a 2018 study estimated that the average superyacht spent \$75,000 in total during their stay, with an overall direct spend of \$4 million. More than half of this was spent on superyacht services such as fuel, marinas, maintenance, and agents, with the remainder largely spent on provisioning, food, and beverages.⁴⁶ For countries catering to the refit and maintenance of superyachts, this is often the largest expenditure area.

40 Market Development Facility. 2018. *Economic Impact of International Yachting in Fiji*.

41 M.E. Consulting. 2017. *Auckland's Superyacht Industry: Outlook and Potential Economic Impacts*.

42 Government of Queensland. 2022. *Queensland Superyacht Strategy 2018 to 2025*. Edition 2. Updated in May 2022.

43 Market Development Facility. 2018. *Economic Impact of International Yachting in Fiji*.

44 Boat International. 2021. *Foreign superyachts splash A\$100M in Aus and spend 75% longer there*.

45 The Superyacht Agency. 2020. *Economic Impact of Superyachts in Tahiti 2019*.

46 Market Development Facility. 2018. *Economic Impact of International Yachting in Fiji*.

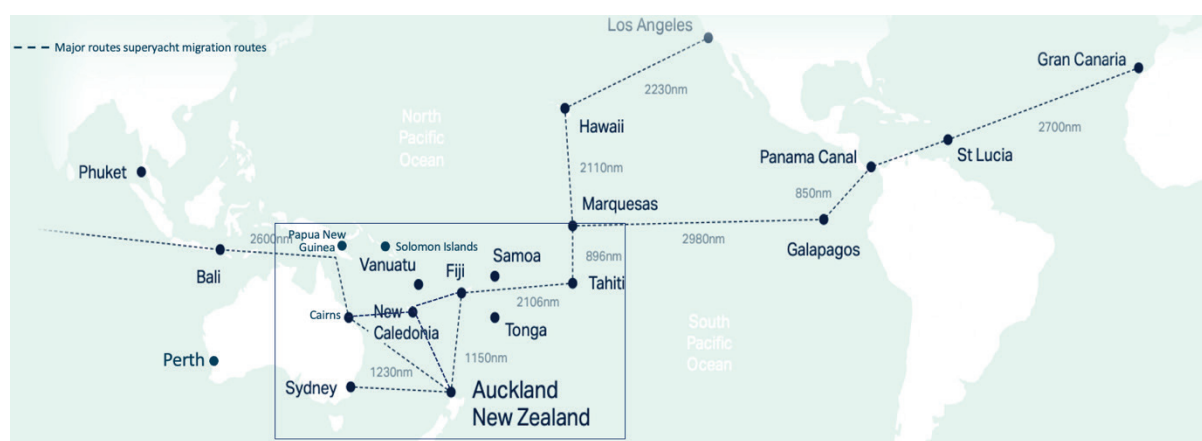
3.3 Migration patterns

Three main international migration patterns bring yachts to the Pacific Region:⁴⁷

- (i) Trans-Pacific routes: Yachts migrating across the Pacific from the east; from the United States and the Panama Canal, through Hawaii, Tahiti, Fiji, and on.
- (ii) Seasonal routes out of Australia: Yachts cruising out from Australia and back.
- (iii) Seasonal routes out of New Zealand: Yachts cruising out from New Zealand and back.

Superyachts are likely to follow similar routes but with more diverse patterns due to being less dependent on prevailing winds and therefore more flexible in following owners' wishes.

Figure 1: Major Superyacht Migration Routes in the Pacific Region



Source: Adapted from SuperYacht New Zealand. 2021. *Ready when you are.*

3.4 Country comparison

Within the South Pacific region, Australia and New Zealand are well-developed superyacht centers. Both countries have invested significantly in infrastructure and the enabling environment to provide a full suite of services including construction, refit and maintenance, chartering, and other support services such as marinas, provisioning, logistics, entertainment, shopping, restaurants, and quality information on cruising in their waters.

Fiji, New Caledonia, and Tahiti have made investments to cater to superyachts as cruising destinations. This includes infrastructure such as marinas and limited maintenance facilities, yacht services, and the regulatory environment. They also have the type of high-end onshore facilities (resorts, restaurants, bars, and boutiques) that add to the destination's appeal. However, they do not have the facilities or supply chains to support extensive maintenance or refits. In Fiji, various investments have led to the number of superyachts visiting doubling from approximately 30 to 60 per year, and the revenue generated from

47 Market Development Facility. 2018. *Economic Impact of International Yachting in Fiji.*

each superyacht also doubling. Surveys for 2018 indicated that each superyacht visiting Fiji contributed on average \$100,000 to the Fijian economy, compared to an estimated \$53,000 in 2010.⁴⁸

This growth was supported by the introduction of the Superyacht Charter Act in 2010 which refined outdated domestic clearance legislation, opened up cruising areas, and simplified the process of superyacht crew changeover and foreign crew working visa processes in Fiji.⁴⁹ At the same time, investment in Port Denarau developed it into a world class superyacht facility, with multimillion-dollar investments in Vuda Marina and Nawi Island Marina. To further attract this market during the COVID-19 pandemic, Fiji joined with Australia, New Zealand, and Tahiti as part of the Temporary Import Entry program allowing foreign-flagged superyachts to cruise in Fiji's waters for a minimum of 18 months. In 2022, Fiji reduced the minimum weekly superyacht charter fee from \$55,000 to \$30,000.⁵⁰

Other Pacific Island countries—including the Cook Islands and Vanuatu—welcome visiting superyachts but do not have significant infrastructure or a developed enabling environment. In 2013, Vanuatu amended the Import Duties Act to allow superyacht charters. Investments have also been made in the wharves in Port Vila and Luganville that support the fuelling of superyachts, and there are growing support services.

Melanesian countries—including Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia—were once considered “off the radar” to superyachts. However, there is increasing awareness amongst superyacht owners and charter companies of Melanesia as a destination, particularly when a vessel transitions from North America to Australia or New Zealand.⁵¹

48 Port Denarau Marina. 2011. *Superyachts on the rise? New decree, untouched beauty lure \$m business to our waters*; and Palladium. 2021. *Digital Innovation for Smoother Sailing in Fiji*. Online Newsletter, 3 December. In 2010, 32 superyachts visited Fiji, generating \$1.7 million in revenue for the economy.

49 Port Denarau Marina. 2011. *Superyachts on the rise? New decree, untouched beauty lure \$m business to our waters*; and Super Yachts, Super Growth And Super Opportunity For Fiji; South Pacific Tourism Organization. 2017. *Luxury Yachts in Fiji*; and FBC News. 2022. *More superyachts expected to charter Fiji waters*. 25 July.

50 Boat International. 2022. *Foreign-flagged vessels permitted to cruise in the South Pacific under new regulations*. 24 May.

51 Boat International. 2022. *Why more superyachts are enjoying the marvels of Melanesia*. 15 August.

4. CASE STUDY: SOLOMON ISLANDS SWOT ANALYSIS

4.1 Situation overview

The number of superyachts visiting Solomon Islands each year is not known. However, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that there are between one to two visits per year to either the Western Province, the Arnavon Islands, or Honiara. The value of these superyachts to Solomon Islands' economy is also unknown.

The primary cruising season is June to September however with cyclones during the November to May season not prevalent in all of Solomon Islands, superyachts can potentially cruise throughout the year.

Solomon Islands has an existing base level of services that are available to superyachts, including an international standard shipyard, agents to support provisioning and logistics, two international airports, and various clearance ports and safe anchorages (Table 1).

There are also several international superyacht charter companies already promoting Solomon Islands as a superyacht destination, including EYOS Expeditions, Ocean Alliance, TWW Yachts, The Yacht Charter Company, Charter World, Paul David Superyachts, and Spirit Luxury Charters. Most of these companies market Solomon Islands as for adventurous and curious wealthy individuals with a focus on diving and Melanesian culture. They offer 7- to 10-day superyacht charter itineraries covering Honiara, Florida Islands, Russel Islands, Marovo Lagoon, Tetepare, Munda, Gizo, Shortland Islands, and Arnavon Islands. These itineraries either start and finish in Honiara or Munda, exploring Solomon Islands only, or start in Cairns and include Solomon Islands as part of a larger itinerary including Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

There are limited sources of information for cruising tips and guides.⁵² Those that are available are aimed at all yachts, not specifically superyachts, and much of it is not up to date. The Customs Shipping Directive 2022—which outlines arrival procedures for superyachts—is the only regulation that specifically mentions superyachts.⁵³

52 For example, [Bosun Birds](#) and [Solomon Islands Cruising Guide](#).

53 Government of Solomon Islands. 2022. [Customs Shipping Directive](#). 11 October.

Table 1: Existing Services available for Superyachts in Solomon Islands, 2023

Superyacht Service	Organization & Location
Maintenance	- Sasape International Shipyard Limited (Tulagi). Offers repair and maintenance, haul out, berthage, and accommodation.
Provisioning and Logistics (includes port agent, food imports, aviation, bunkering, supports, itineraries and guiding, security, etc.)	- Silent World Logistics (Honiara) - Trade Co Shipping Ltd (Honiara) - GS Services (Honiara) - Solomon's Superyacht Services (Gizo) provides limited services to superyachts visiting the Western Province. - Melanesian Yachts (Sydney)
Fuel (Bunkering)	- Fuel dock in Honiara and Noro ports
Security Services	- Kinetic Fighting (Honiara)
Clearance Ports	- Honiara, Guadalcanal Province (customs, quarantine and immigration) - Noro, Western Province (customs, quarantine and immigration) - Gizo, Western Province (customs, quarantine and immigration with notice) - Lata, Santa Cruz Province (customs and immigration) - Taro Island, Choiseul Province - Shortland Islands, Western Province
Airports (International, and suitable for private jets)	- Honiara, Guadalcanal Province - Munda, Western Province
Anchorage	- Many protected anchorage spots are located throughout the islands.

Source: Consultant's desk research, 2023.

4.2 Solomon Islands: Strengths

Unspoiled and uncrowded cruising grounds: Solomon Islands' extensive network of islands is ideal for cruising. As an emerging tourism destination many of these islands are not visited by tourists and do not have, or remain unspoiled from tourism development. Overcrowding in the Mediterranean and a trend for exploration is seeing superyacht owners, charter brokers, and their wealthy clients look for alternative cruising options with natural assets.⁵⁴ Melanesian countries—such as Solomon Islands—are perceived as unique superyacht destinations that appeal to more adventurous owners and charter guests.⁵⁵

Significant natural and cultural heritage assets: Extensive and healthy coral reefs, rich marine and terrestrial biodiversity, and unique cultures provide opportunities for marine and land-based nature activities such as diving, snorkeling, kayaking, hiking, village tours, fishing, surfing, and turtle conservation. While most superyachts do not require local tourism operators for marine-based activities as they carry equipment and instructors on board, having the natural attractions that make these activities exceptional is a prerequisite for attracting the superyacht market.

Located on a superyacht migration path: Solomon Islands is located between three cruising regions—Southeast Asia, Australia, and Polynesia—and is on the superyacht migration path from North America westwards. It has the potential to be a superyacht meeting point as superyachts cross from the Pacific into Australian or even Asian waters.

Located close to a major superyacht center: Cairns, the Gold Coast, and Brisbane have been making significant investments to become superyacht hubs for construction, maintenance and refit, and charters. Cairns, in particular, is one of the busiest ports of entry in Australia for visiting superyachts. Solomons Islands is a 3- to 5-day voyage from Queensland providing an opportunity for superyachts to include Solomon Islands in their seasonal itineraries.

Existing maritime infrastructure largely suitable for superyachts: Honiara and Noro both have significant port facilities that could be leveraged to provide some superyacht services. Noro offers potential as a superyacht service center due to its proximity to Munda International Airport, key tourism areas such as Western Province and Greater Arnavons, and its existing maritime infrastructure and services for fueling, provisioning, and logistics that already support the tuna fishing industry.

Two international airports: The international airports in Honiara and Munda are both suitable for private jets, crew, and guest changeovers.

Superyacht processing is relatively unbureaucratic: Unlike Fiji, Vanuatu, and Tahiti, the Solomon Islands does not have a charter tax, and clearance formalities are reasonably streamlined for foreign-flagged yachts.

Professional shipping agents: There are agents in Honiara and Gizo that can already support superyacht logistics, bunkering, and provisioning.

54 International Banker. 2023. *Superyachts and Private Travel: Discover The Latest Trends*. 23 March.

55 The Superyacht Agency. 2020. *Economic Impact of Superyachts in Tahiti 2019*.

4.3 Solomon Islands: Weaknesses

Low awareness of Solomon Islands as a cruising destination: Whilst several superyacht charter companies include Solomon Islands on their websites, the small number of charters arriving in Solomon Islands suggests that charter brokers, owners, or captains remain unfamiliar with the destination and that the destination is not being actively promoted.

Limited marketing resources to channel to a new niche market segment: Resources are spread thinly and are used to support existing marketing priorities. Redirecting them may negatively impact other segments.

A shortage of world-class amenities onshore: Despite wanting to travel to uncrowded and remote areas, superyacht owners and charter guests still typically expect world-class onshore amenities in destinations, including restaurants, shopping boutiques, and provisioners.⁵⁶ Solomon Islands does not offer any of these facilities, which limits the country's appeal and also reduces opportunities for superyacht guests and crew to spend money in the country.

An absence of world-class marinas and supporting infrastructure suitable for superyachts: Marinas enable superyachts to stay longer in a destination and can generate significant revenue and employment, both directly and indirectly. As superyacht marinas around the world increase in quality, owners, guests, and crew are used to the comfort they provide and are increasingly unwilling to compromise in these areas.⁵⁷ Without such infrastructure—including facilities for fuelling and maintenance—it is challenging for Solomon Islands to attract or extend the length of stay of superyachts.

A challenging investment environment: Factors including inadequate supporting infrastructure, limited skilled labor, high utility costs, and land tenure issues make it difficult to attract the foreign direct investment that is needed to develop world-class facilities.⁵⁸

Limited international airline connections: Although there are two international airports, there are a limited number of arrivals or connecting destinations, which poses logistical challenges for crew changeover and guest travel. International flights from larger markets on migration routes—such as Australia and New Zealand—are not daily.

4.4 Solomon Islands: Opportunities

Yachting tourism can reach remote communities that may not otherwise benefit from tourism: Visiting superyachts can explore almost all areas of Solomon Islands. While most superyacht spending is concentrated in the yachting centers, there can be a positive impact from comparatively small levels of spending in remote communities. This may include payment for informal tours and activities, anchorages fees, *kastom* fees for access to ancestral cultural heritage sites, payment for fresh produce, handicrafts, essential supplies, emergency and philanthropic support, and repairs to village equipment such as generators and solar installations.

56 Grand View Research. 2023. *Superyacht Market Analysis and Growth Report 2030*.

57 The Superyacht Agency. 2020. *Economic Impact of Superyachts in Tahiti 2019*.

58 Government of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's [*Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific*](#).

International superyacht charter companies are already promoting Solomon Islands as a destination:

There are opportunities to build partnerships with superyacht charter companies to market Solomon Islands to superyacht owners, captains, and clients as a destination and how it can fit into seasonal itineraries.

Increasing demand from superyachts can attract new infrastructure spending: As a high-value segment, the superyacht market has the potential to attract investment in supporting infrastructure. However, a significant level of investment requires high confidence in the growth of the sector and government commitment.

4.5 Solomon Islands: Threats

Competition from other Pacific Island countries: Countries such as Tahiti and Fiji have a competitive advantage in that they are already established as superyacht destinations and are making substantial infrastructure investments, have eased regulations, and have developed incentives to grow their market share.

Limited availability of high-quality service levels: As a luxury market, the selection of a cruising destination for superyachts is heavily dependent on the reputation of local tourism and superyacht products and service suppliers. Word of mouth amongst superyacht captains, owners, and charter companies is important, with poor quality service having the potential to quickly tarnish a destination's reputation.⁵⁹ The limited skilled and experienced workforce and the shortage of high-end service delivery in Solomon Islands could quickly negatively affect its reputation as a destination.

Perceptions of safety and security: Given the high value of superyachts, a high level of confidence is needed that any port they call into is safe and secure for the superyacht, its owner, crew, and guests. International media coverage of civil conflict in Solomon Islands influences perceptions that may need to be challenged through active marketing and promotion.

An absence of clear regulations and procedures: While a light bureaucratic touch can be beneficial, a lack of regulation can also create uncertainty and leave parties vulnerable to being or feeling exploited. Low confidence in a destination reduces its appeal. A lack of regulation may inhibit Solomon Islands from economically benefitting from visiting superyachts.

The introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST): Experience in other countries has shown the impact taxation can have on commercially operated superyachts. Until 2017, 10% GST was imposed on the full import purchase price of visiting superyachts—not on the value of the individual charter—a fee which could reach millions of dollars. As a result, superyachts bypassed Australia in favor of Fiji, New Zealand, and Tahiti.⁶⁰

59 M.E. Consulting. 2017. *Auckland's Superyacht Industry: Outlook and Potential Economic Impacts*.

60 Superyacht Australia. 2017. *Superyacht industry potential once stifled in Australia draws hope from GST relaxation*. 15 September.

4.6 Solomon Islands: Next steps

This paper provides a high-level overview of superyachting from a tourism perspective and is drawn from desk-based research. As such it is intended to provide background briefing to support policy discussions. To explore the opportunities and costs of this market and before any policy or planning decisions, a more detailed assessment should be undertaken, including a review of essential infrastructure and the specifications required to cater to superyachts.

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